

Approved For Release 2004/05/05 : CIA-RDP75B00159R000200090005-6
CLASSIFIED MESSAGE**SECRET**

(When Filled In)

FILE INFO

REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

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REF:

TO: WENDELL BEVAN FROM: KELLY JOHNSON

MY SECRETARY WANTED TO ANSWER THE REFERENCE WIRE SAYING, "BECAUSE BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL", HOWEVER THE REAL ANSWER IS THAT STARTING IN 1958 WE RAN FLIGHT TESTS COVERING A PERIOD OF EIGHT YEARS TO DEVELOP A LOT OF NEW PAINT. ON AT LEAST THREE DIFFERENT OCCASIONS TESTS WERE RUN WITH ONE BIRD VIEWING THE OTHER FROM ALL ASPECTS, TO GET PILOT COMMENT ON THE EASE OF VISUAL DETECTION. EARLY PAINT WHICH WAS BLACK WAS APPROXIMATELY THREE TIMES AS GOOD AS AN UNPAINTED AIRPLANE IN MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR AN ATTACKING AIRPLANE TO SEE THE BIRD. WE CONDUCTED LABORATORY TESTS AND SOME FLIGHT TESTS, GOING THROUGH FIRST A DARK BLUE AND THEN ENDING UP WITH OUR PRESENT LOW REFLECTION BLACK PAINT. THE PRESENT PAINT, IN LABORATORY TESTS, SHOWS ONLY TWO PERCENT AS MUCH REFLECTIVITY

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AS THE AVERAGE OTHER PAINTS TESTED.

SOME PAINTS WERE DISCARDED DUE TO LACK OF ADHESION.

AT ONE STAGE OF THE GAME WE PAINTED ONE AIRCRAFT WITH

WHITE POLKA DOTS ON A BLACK BACKGROUND. THIS TURNED

OUT TO BE VERY GOOD WHEN VIEWED FROM ABOVE, BUT NOT

WHEN VIEWED FROM UNDERNEATH AGAINST A DARK BLUE SKY.

I AM SENDING UNDER SEPARATE COVER, RESULTS OF ONE FLIGHT

TEST AS REPORTED BY

I AM NOT ABLE TO FIND ALL OF THE LETTERS GOING BACK TO

1956, WHEN I FIRST WROTE RECOMMENDING THE USE OF DULL

BLACK PAINT.

I TRUST THE ABOVE ADEQUATELY ANSWERS

SECRET

BT